



NEWS RELEASE

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U.S. EMBASSY FORMALLY OPENS NEW ANNEX BUILDING FOR CONSULAR SERVICES AND OTHER OFFICES

U.S. Ambassador Harry K. Thomas, Jr. formally opened on Wednesday, April 27, the American Embassy's new \$50-million annex building, which he described as "a work of art on a grand scale."

"Finally, the quality of the facility matches the quality of the people who work here," the Ambassador said of the Embassy's new facility in its 1201 Roxas Boulevard compound in the Ermita district of Manila.

Foreign Affairs Secretary Albert del Rosario and Manila Vice Mayor Isko Moreno were among the guests at the grand opening and ribbon cutting-ceremony for the new building, as was Rodney Evans, Managing Director of Overseas Building Operations at the U.S. Department of State. Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala represented the Makati Development Corporation. Popular Filipino entertainers Lea Salonga, Ogie Alcasid, Jaya, Nina, and Bea Tantoco performed at the program that followed the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

The new building houses Consular services and other offices. It has 99 windows for passport, visa, and other Consular service applications as well as comfortable and more spacious indoor and outdoor waiting areas. The new indoor waiting area alone can seat more than 550 applicants at any one time.

The building is part of a larger Embassy facilities improvement project that represents a \$130-million investment in the local economy and the creation of 2,000 jobs for Filipinos. Constructed by Makati Development Corporation, a subsidiary of Ayala Land Inc., all buildings in the facilities improvement project are energy-efficient and meet stringent seismic codes and green building standards. This is the largest contract yet awarded by the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations to a foreign contractor.

The Embassy's new Veterans Affairs (VA) building, which Ambassador Thomas formally inaugurated on April 13, is also part of the Embassy's facilities improvement project. The VA building at the Embassy's Seafront Compound in Pasay City houses the benefits office and an out-patient clinic with modern facilities and state-of-the-art laboratories accredited by the College of American Pathologists.

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